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bring us each year even a little nearer to our ideal. It would seem as if a creed so wholly out of harmony with the needs and aspirations of modern society as the Mohammedan should, as rapidly as possible, have its connection with politics everywhere severed, and be confined exclusively to the spiritual domain. It has many merits, and is doing work in Africa which seems to indicate that it furnishes a more efficacious solvent for the more degrading forms of heathenism than Christianity itself, by rousing a personal pride which to some races is the first step in upward progress. But in Europe and Asia its possession of temporal power is purely mischievous. In the tremendous struggle with a hard lot upon which the civilized world has entered within the present century with so much increase of energy, a creed which preaches the futility of striving is simply an obstacle to be set aside, if not destroyed, with as little ceremony as possible.

EDWIN L. GODKIN.

ART. VII. — CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE.

1. — *X. Doudan. Mélanges et Lettres. Avec une Introduction par M. LE COMTE D'HAUSSONVILLE, et des Notices par MM. DE SACY, CUVILLIER-FLEURY.* 2 Vols. Paris : Calmann Lévy. 1876.

XIMENÈS DOUDAN was a man almost unknown during his lifetime, outside of a circle small in number, but composed of some of the most celebrated of his contemporaries. His life was singularly uneventful, but his immunity from harassing cares and heavy griefs gave him leisure for his favorite literary studies, and his fine nature needed no added guard to save it from luxurious selfishness. He was born at Douai in 1800, and at an early age was left an orphan. He made his way to Paris to complete his education, intending to become a teacher, and while holding a humble tutorship at one of the great Parisian schools already admired by many who were destined to make a mark in the world, he received the position of tutor to the son left by Madame de Staël from her marriage with M. de Rocca. This introduced him in 1826 into the household of the Duc de Broglie, whose wife was a daughter of Madame de Staël by her first marriage, and until his death in 1872 he remained closely connected with this family

by bonds of affection and friendship. While the Duc de Broglie was in political life, Doudan was his valuable assistant, but during that time what he really cared most for was retirement and the opportunity to devote himself uninterruptedly to reading and study; this is shown by the fact that, when the Duke retired from active participation in politics, Doudan refused flattering offers to remain in an official position, and for the next thirty years, that is, until his death, devoted himself uninterruptedly to his favorite pursuits. Those who knew him intimately were indeed few, but their testimony is unanimous in regard to his charm in conversation, the fertility of his ideas, and the correctness of his taste. Their verdict would have been sufficient to satisfy any one that here was a man whose worth was much greater than his fame, but now the memorial of him in these two volumes enables us to judge for ourselves, and to share the pleasure, which only a small number had enjoyed, of reading the intimate expression of his opinions of men and things and books.

He was no mere bookworm, ignorant of practical matters; his experience had necessarily taught him much, and he had studied men as well as books, but the main charm of his letters is to be found in his devotion to literature, not as a trade from which fame or possibly fortune is to be derived, but as a constant source of delight and instruction. Books were his best friends, but they received no indiscriminate admiration; he was capable of enthusiasm, but he was one of the exactest critics of modern times, and the freedom of letter-writing enabled him to say much which those who wrote for the public would have considered too unconventional to utter, while at the same time he was never one of those who do nothing themselves except exercise their virulence in decrying their more active contemporaries. His own contributions to literature were but few in number, and may better be noticed in connection with the volume promised us, which is to contain a work on literature to which he gave his best thought and his fullest care. The letters will serve to make him personally known to us in the most satisfactory way, and will throw full light on his literary tastes and critical ability.

The selections published in these volumes are from the great mass of his correspondence between 1827 and 1872, — a long period, and one of great importance to France. At the time they began he already belonged to the household of the Duc de Broglie, and in them we find not only continual reference to the events of the day and to the new books, but also many passages showing a wise and generous philosophy. His humor is delightful, and constantly helps him to keep the proper men-

tal equilibrium, moderating his wrath and tempering his enthusiasm. The very qualities that give value to his critical work and charm to his observations on the world incapacitated him for active production ; he set his ideal high with regard to the work of others, but did no less for himself, and he judged himself as rigidly as he did any one else. He had a keen eye for all manner of pretence, and he kept his taste pure, in the only sure way, by constantly returning to study the best models. He was no partisan in the fierce literary struggle that agitated France while he was a young man ; he remained outside of every literary coterie, and judged them all impartially.

Before quoting from his letters such passages as may throw light on his opinions in literary matters, it may be worth while to call attention to this passage, written to perhaps his most intimate friend, M. Raulin, in 1841, which illustrates admirably his sensitive, tender nature as well as his attractive humor. He writes as follows :—

“In the first place, my dear friend, it is you who are stupid in thinking that your letter is stupid ; although that is something very embarrassing in metaphysics, for hitherto there has been no case of the effect being greater than the cause. You were quite right about the degree of importance to be given to each thing, and you are right when you say that it is not necessary to listen as attentively to the reading of a report to the council as one does to a dialogue of Plato. . . . But if you need to regard everything closely, nothing will cure you of it. I am a victim of the same mania ; I have to look at all the details. One must follow one's natural bent, or remain powerless. We should waste our lives trying to form our minds anew. One who feels irresistibly impelled that way should make up his mind to do little things well. . . . But you must know that business men and people with common sense do not share this mania which afflicts us. They work *grosso modo*. *Grosso modo* is the secret of success in this world. It is necessary to talk, comprehend, and act *grosso modo*. Dulness of intelligence is in harmony with the general movement of the world,—of the world of men, I mean. Hence the success of M. Scribe ; . . . hence the grace, the elegance, and the lively imagination of M. Horace Vernet. . . . While you are looking with trembling admiration at the wing of a butterfly, all those ogres have swallowed ten roasted chickens' wings. Such is the world. Your part is not with them. Do well and delicately what they do quickly and grossly, and as a reward for your zeal people will say, ‘That poor Raulin has a deucedly delicate mind,’ and they will be right. The world moves quickly, and does not look at anything very closely. When its huge wheels, greased with whale-oil, meet delicate, light wheels cut in diamond, which turn rapidly and noiselessly on a polished axis, there is a shock, but the little wheels are of diamond and are not broken. Their motion is controlled by another law. You will get your reward in eternity, where a butterfly's wing is considered superior to a Mayence ham ; but here is the kingdom of the Mayence hams. You may

do your best, but you will never eat as fast as others. The ham will make you think of the boar, the boar of the forest, the forest of the mountains, of the eternal snows, of the rivers silently gliding over the earth, and meanwhile there is nothing left but the bone of the ham, and you will be sitting pale and distraught among a crowd of jolly fellows in good condition and well stuffed, who will make fun of you at the first chance. Let them gorge till they die of it."

It is very clear that a man who writes in this way is probably one who either has been unsuccessful, or who has not ventured into the struggle for fame from diffidence. This last was always Doudan's position; he preferred observing the world to taking part in it; he stood out of the current of life and watched it pass him, commenting upon it without envy and without passion. There has been no lack of Frenchmen who have left behind them sayings in which they express their verdict about human life, but Doudan differs from La Rochefoucauld by his gentleness, and from such others as Vauvenargues and Joubert not only by the absence of anything like a system, but also by the constant flow of an agreeable humor. All his remarks on human nature are incidental; the nearest approach to connected disquisition is in his comments on literature, and these are scattered here and there in letters to different people, and of course are interrupted continually by reference to the events of the day. His judgment, though narrow, was fine and true, and although there were limits to his admirations, he had keen sympathy for the best work. As will be shown, some of the qualities of German writers he could not comprehend, but again he had more comprehension of certain English traits than some of his fellow-countrymen have. He admired the classics, not as an echoer of tradition, but with real knowledge of them, and he had an especial fondness for French literature. He was by no means carried away by the changes that the last fifty years have seen brought into French writing. His humor forbade his believing that Victor Hugo was all that he gave himself out to be before a credulous world, and the barbaric tinsel and glitter of that poet and of Lamartine, though he was ready enough to acknowledge the power of both, left him cold. He saw through Renan, and in the year 1858 wrote of him as follows in one of his letters:—

"The truth is, he is like a young colt which takes pleasure in kicking up its heels. He adds a little of the malice of the monkey to this friskiness of the colt. Vague ideas are certainly necessary, and an intelligent man who has only clear ideas is a fool who will never discover anything; but some tolerably solid bones are necessary to sustain any living being whatsoever except the race of serpents. I do not see M. Renan's bones."

Again, ten years later, speaking of his Life of St. Paul, he says : —

"He is a great coquette in the order of theologians and *savants*. His coquetry is mingled with impertinence, but he gives his contemporaries what they desire in everything, sweetmeats with a taste of the infinite. He is like certain apothecaries who have made cod-liver oil a very agreeable drink, only all the active principles have left the cod-liver oil, and those who drink it are left as lymphatic as they were before. When I read him I feel a certain wrath, for I consider that it is treating me with insufficient respect to offer me his remarks for reasoning ; and, to continue this subject, have you ever wondered why women especially almost always turn the conversation to discussing music ? In my opinion, — and I must say I do not know much about music, — if it has this superiority over all the other arts and over literature that it can yet say something to the soul when words expire, so to speak, it has, on the other hand, this inherent defect of being very vague, and of being half physical and half moral. Now this age is to excess half physical and half moral ; it likes to be moved rather than to reflect. It wishes to enjoy everything without dreaming of making the manly effort of trying to conciliate things. It rocks in a swing, now up, now down, without going forward, and without any effort of the will. In the same way Renan gives his readers that same delight with his dreamy, soft, insinuating style which goes around questions without pressing very closely, like little serpents. It is a sort of chamber music, such as Plato wanted to exclude from the education of youth. It is in listening to such music that men resign themselves to getting such amusement from everything that they endure despotism while dreaming of liberty, and forget to row as they glide along with the current, thinking complacently of the energetic souls who have changed and bettered the world at other times, because, as they say in their insolent pride, these souls were narrow and did not understand the complexity of the world, *à la bonne heure !*"

This long extract shows how great was his critical ability, and this is merely one of a great number of brief but sound characterizations of his contemporaries, while at the same time he by no means neglected the men of other times. He spoke thus, for instance, of Goethe's "Elective Affinities" : —

"I should not dare to speak to you of it if the name of Goethe did not cover everything. There must be in his language great beauty of style, for in other respects it is more than singular with respect to morality in the first place, and then even the ideas which have nothing to do with morality are clumsy or false or puerile. I mean it when I say that I probably understand nothing of it. A man who did not shed a tear on hearing a sermon when all the rest of the congregation were weeping bitterly, said coldly, 'I don't belong to this parish' ; and perhaps he was right. Every nation possesses certain chords of feeling which are perfectly strange to foreigners. You would not be astonished, on returning to Etioles after a long absence, in company with an English-woman and a Polish woman who had never lived there, if they were less moved than you by the *je ne sais quoi* which those woods and walls and

fields have for you. Every people recognizes that *je ne sais quoi* in its writers. We have less than other nations, that is perhaps one of the reasons of our universality. For a long time we have undertaken to utter to the universe generalities which may please. We make pieces of furniture and fashionable articles, but as for the thousand nothings which touch the secret fibres of a family, of a province, we are wholly without them. A tress of a certain person's hair cannot move every one. I am then very insensible to the elective affinities, but I am not so stupid as not to believe in Goethe's talent."

It is not in a nature like this that narrowness exists, although Doudan was by no means incapable of strong dislike where weaker people, from a dread of being considered illiberal, would join in the popular cry of admiration of anything, however faulty. If he frankly confessed that he did not understand Goethe, he carefully refrained from putting the blame on that author. An interesting point to which he was continually returning was this difficulty of comprehending foreign authors, and the statements of so wise and so frank a man are of the greatest value. He said, for instance, —

"I did not love Dante devotedly till after I had seen Italy ; now I find in him the echo of all the sounds I heard then. . . . In a word, we belong to the North, and possibly the East and South which we love are those which have passed through Northern imaginations. We need blue glasses to look at that view. Perhaps it is a bit of the jugglery of modern criticism that makes us think we find those ways charming which are not our ways, and those tastes which are not our tastes ; but, after all, we shall always understand Shakespeare better than Calderon, and Montaigne and Molière better than Shakespeare."

He did not care for books alone, as the extracts already made might indicate, and although he was an exceedingly acute literary critic, there are numerous passages in these letters which show how sensitive he was to other influences. A few passages taken from here and there will illustrate this : —

"From a distance I am for Athens ; nature has finished beauty for us only when it has been the theatre of a great nation's history. All the great men who have passed over that bit of earth have taken with them the memory of the outline of these mountains, and that is something for the mountains."

"When one wishes to injure persons, the first thing to do is to assume an air of great impartiality with regard to them."

"I have a suspicion that it is only in the brighter, more glowing day of Italy that one finds Roman history in its true colors ; and at a distance in our dismal gray cities, it too becomes gray. Before I had seen the surroundings of Rome I imagined all the heroes of its history to have been something like the old counsellors of the Parliament of Paris, and I imagined them dwelling in a place like the Marais or the Ile St. Louis. Among other instances Ha-

drian's face has wholly changed for me since I visited the Villa Adriani. I remember we were guided to the middle of that labyrinth of trees, marbles, and old walls by a little girl, who must have died since, for her large eyes were heavy with fever. The beautiful trees, the lovely weather, the birds that were singing and flying from the ruined vaults to the wood all filled with flowers, lent a little of their youth and beauty to the old history, of which only the dust remains. The Southern sky and landscape make us love the men of the South, who in their time hardly thought of the sunsets which make us dream of them to-day."

These quotations must suffice. It would be easy to fill many pages with delicate criticism, kindly jesting, and sympathetic comment, with what makes the best of the conversation of a thoughtful, cultivated man; but it would be better to urge the reader to turn to the two volumes themselves, that he may find there instruction and delight. This is not a book for the day, but one that will surely long find a place on the shelves of those who care for the sincere outpouring of a gracious, sensitive, and refined soul. It is a long time since so *literary* a book has appeared, and it should be fitly appreciated.

2. — *The Works and Life of Walter Savage Landor*. Edited by JOHN FORSTER. In Eight Volumes. London: Chapman and Hall. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 8vo. 1876.

LANDOR died September 17, 1864, and fully twelve years will have elapsed before a complete edition of his various writings is presented to English readers. An author well known, but comparatively unread, a man who had outlived his contemporaries and had largely helped to educate the few minds that could teach the many to appreciate him, he died in his ninetieth year, just as his genius began to make itself felt in our literature. Landor was the literary phenomenon of this century. Others surpassed him in various ways, — Wordsworth in poetry, Coleridge in philosophy, many in the technicalities of art, — but Landor was too independent in character, too conscious of his own abilities, too well grounded in the canons of criticism, too much in communion with the great originals in literature, to be drawn from his peculiar path of life or from the working out of his manifest destiny as an author. A man less self-contained, or more dependent upon the fruits of his industry for his support, would have failed to abide his time. Not so Landor; he lived as truly among the immortals of Greece or Rome or the Elizabethan age, as Macaulay did among the poets, wits, and novelists of Queen Anne's reign. He lived his own life; and strangely inconsistent as that was, a medley of freaks and